1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

C. *Omens*

We have seen how the addling of the eggs of the *kasyeq-gaita's* hens may lead to the abandonment of a village site[1]; how the siting of a new Bison-horn village is affected by the finding of roots or stones when the *perma* digs a hole for the first *saja* post, and how even when these omens have allowed the hole to be dug, they have further to be confirmed by the villagers waiting till the next day to see whether two heaps of rice have been disturbed[2]; and how before the ceremonial *weta* hunts of the Bison-horn Marias begin, the *perma* consults the omens with two split pieces of a tooth-stick.[3] The Bison-horn Maria often calls in the *waddai* to examine the omens and fix auspicious days for sowing or other occasions. Omens are particularly important in connexion with betrothals and weddings, but among Bison-horn Marias only; the Hill Marias, except those living in contact with the Bison-horn Marias, seem not to worry over them, and in fact to be ignorant of the whole practice. But the Bison-horn Maria likes everything done on an auspicious day, and then only if no adverse omen is met. Russell and Hiralal (III, p. 78) write:—

> 'In Bastar an omen is taken before the wedding. The village elders meet on an auspicious day as Monday, Thursday or Friday, and after midnight they cook and eat food, and go out into the forest. They look for a small black bird called Usi, from which omens are commonly taken. When anybody sees this bird, if it cries "*Sus, Sus*" on the right hand, it is thought that the marriage will be lucky. If, however, it cries "*Chi, Chi*", or "*Fis, Fis*", the proposed match is held to be of evil omen, and is cancelled. The Koya Gonds of Bastar distil mahua liquor before arranging for a match. If the liquor is good, they think the marriage will be lucky, and take the liquor with them to cement the betrothal; but if it is bad they think the marriage will be unlucky, and the proposal is dropped.'

The *usi* bird is a common source of omens; the Marias of the Kutru zamindari below the Abujhmar hills, who are really Hill Marias influenced greatly by contact with Bison-horn Marias and Teluguized Dorlas, when they select a new *modul wadde* as clan-priest and social arbiter, consult the omens before confirming their selection; they go to the forest, and if they hear an *usi* twittering on their left as they go and on their right as they return, consider that the omens favour their selection, but make a fresh selection if the bird twitters on the other sides. Among Bison-horn Marias the *usi* is not the usual source of marriage omens; if the party on its way to ask for a girl's hand in marriage meets a tiger, panther, sambhur, chital, jackal or snake crossing their path from left to right, it is a good omen; if it crosses the path from right to left, the omen is bad, but merely shows that the expedition has started on a bad day and must

[1] See p. 103. [2] See pp. 122-3. [3] See p. 211.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

be postponed for a week or two, not that the proposed match should be dropped.

D. Beliefs about Natural Phenomena

To the Hill Maria the universe is *Bhum*, the sky being *Pogho-bhum*, and the earth *Adi-bhum*; they have no name for any underworld or home of the Departed. They sometimes say that they have heard of a god named Ispural living in *Pogho-bhum*, but that they do not worship him. To Hill and Bison-horn Maria the sun (*porad*) is a Koitor, the moon (*lenj*) his woman, and the stars (*hukom* or *minkos*, Hill Maria; *uk'ka*, Bison-horn Maria) are their children; falling stars (*Sohra*, Hill Maria) are their excrement; the Bison-horn Marias consider that falling stars are a portent of death. Both Hill and Bison-horn Marias call the Milky Way the Road (*daghar*, Hill Maria; *marg*, Bison-horn), but they do not know who or what uses the road and have no legend about it, though the Bhattras and Murias of Jagdalpur say that it is the road over which Bhimul drives his bullock-cart, the thunder being the rumbling of the wheels. The only constellations for which I could get Hill Maria names were *Nagar* or Plough for Orion and *Khatoli* or Cot for the Great Bear; enquiries on this point among the Bison-horn Marias drew blank. Neither had any theory about the markings on the moon's face; the Hill Marias have observed that they sometimes look like a human face. The Hill Marias call the rainbow the Earth-serpent (*Bhum-taras*, or *Bhum-taras-korta*), and say that it crawls out of a great ant-hill and throws its light across the sky as a sign of no more rain: the Bison-horn Marias call it *Bhimul-vil*, the bow of Bhimul the rain-god. The Hill Marias associate clouds (*mayyal*) with rain (*pegh*), but do not know where the rain comes from. Thunder (*gadar*) and lightning (*orr*) just happen, and do not alarm them, nor do they appear to have any special precautions to take in burying a man killed by lightning, unlike the Bison-horn Maria. But hail (*adur*) terrifies them, and all rush into their houses. They have no explanation of eclipses, which they call *garhar*, an obvious corruption of the Hindi *grahan*; but the idiomatic way of saying 'there is an eclipse' is '*garhar lopinta*', literally 'the eclipse is swallowing'; and both they and Bison-horn Marias call a man with a hare-lip '*garhar-kandya*', an expression which they themselves cannot explain and is borrowed direct from their Hindu neighbours, who always attribute a hare-lip to an eclipse during the mother's pregnancy.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

222 had to give a penalty feast to its tribe. It had everything ready save
539 char nuts. When it heard where Waddai was going, it promised to cure his son if he would give it the nuts. The monkey went to the house, pretended to fall into a trance, shaking its head and body, and the boy at once recovered. The monkey told Waddai that he should always cure disease in this way.

'The sun had now set and Waddai went half-way with the monkey to see it home. It was very pleased with the nuts and took Waddai to a honey-comb, drove away the bees and gave the sweet juice and wax to him. Since that day, we have eaten honey and as Waddai took the first honey at night, we take it then also.'

222 The Muria distinguish four kinds of bees: the *bāgh ondār*, which live on big
[125] trees; the *satāru ondār*; the small *kitka ondār* and the *lokti ondār* or *mas*.[1] It is said that the hives of the *bāgh* and *satāru ondār* are discovered when they go according to their habit to get water from a trickling stream. Men go along the stream until they notice bees coming and going and then try to follow them home. The *lokti* are easier to find because they sit buzzing outside their hole, and the honey-gatherer is attracted to the place by the noise. Muria observation is shown by this account: 'All the swarm seek flowers and suck their sweet juice. As the bees sit on the flowers gum sticks to their feet. With this they build their hive, and put the juice inside. They build so well that not a drop leaks out.'

'Only a brave man will go for honey', say the Muria. When they have located a hive, two or three men go together; for the *bāgh ondār* (which are blind in the dark) they go at night. They tie grass at the end of a pole, light it and smoke out the bees. Then they place a bamboo ladder against the
[417] tree and climb up, though sometimes they cut the tree down to save themselves trouble, and collect the honey in hollow bamboo tubes.

[263] The honey is eaten with wheat-cakes or mixed with flour and made into a sweet bread which is greatly liked by children.

Sometimes if the honey-gatherer is unsuccessful in finding a hive, he engages the Siraha or Gunia who searches for it with the help of the winnowing-fan or bits of grass. When he climbs the tree to get the honey, he calls upon the Dead to assist him.

[771] Should a swarm make their hive in or near a house, it is considered very lucky.[2]

524 The Muria's interest in honey-gathering is indicated by the number of riddles about it.[3]

[1] Compare Thurston on the Kond: 'The Khonds recognize four different kinds of bees, known by the following Oriya names: (*a*) *bhaga mohu*, a large-sized bee (*Apis dorsata*); (*b*) *sattapuri mohu*, building its comb in seven layers (*Apis indica*); (*c*) *binchina mohu*, with a comb like a fan; (*d*) *nikiti mohu*, a very small bee.'—Thurston, op. cit., Vol. III, p. 363. I have found similar classifications among the Juang and Gadaba.

[171] [2] 'It *is* considered very lucky if bees or white ants take up their abode in an empty house or at the gate of the city.'—*N.I. Notes and Queries*, Vol. V (1895), p. 52. See also ibid., p. 90. Many Naga actually hang the combs of bees or wasps in front of their houses, perhaps to frighten away wild cats: the Sema say they help to hatch hen's eggs; the Thado Kuki say they ward off evil spirits. Hutton recalls similar beliefs in the Andamans and Malaya, and adds 'I am disposed to suspect the survival of a definitely Negrito belief in the practice of hanging the combs of bees or wasps in the entrance of houses'.—J. H. Hutton, *Diaries of Two Tours in the Unadministered Area east of the Naga Hills* (Calcutta, 1929), p. 6.

[3] A Kharia riddle about the honeycomb: 'In a golden box bells are sounding: when you open it, you get sweet bread.'—S. C. Roy, *The Kharias* (Ranchi, 1937), Vol. II, p. 450.

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

262 in the ordinary way. Rats are a very popular item of diet and so are nearly all wild animals, though tiger-flesh is not usually taken.

● 825 The Muria, especially those living in the east of Kondagaon, where there is still a wonderful supply of game, have a good knowledge of the habits of animals and birds, both practical and fanciful. The tiger and bear appear frequently in folk-tales and songs. Of birds there are many stories. It is curious that [152] the Muria attribute to such birds as the quail and the crane habits of jealousy which are strikingly absent from their own women. The female quail is believed to be possessed by the fear that her husband will be going to other women and is always calling *gudur gudur*. When she lays eggs, 'she makes him sit on them or he might go to other women forgetting his own children'. The female crane also calls her husband with the cry *taranh taranh tenr tenr*. When she lays her eggs in a hollow tree, 'in order to prevent him going after other women while she is hatching them, she makes him sit on them himself and closes the opening of the hollow with mud except for a

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FIG. 8. Pellet-bow
Length 5'

little hole through which she feeds him'. The titur got its name and its cry when at a human marriage the Belosa in charge of all arrangements found she had lost her clitoris (*tila*). As she was looking for it, she met the bird and borrowed one from her. She promised to return it but never did so, and so now the bird is always saying '*Tila de*', 'Give me my clitoris'. The golden oriole's cry is imitated by the chelik as *peking pude*, *peking pude* or 'girl's vagina, girl's vagina' and motiari are said to get very embarrassed when they hear it. The gandachirai, or Greater Indian Night-jar, is supposed to call *tuk-tuk tuk tuk-tuk tuk* which resembles the noise *tukrus tukrus* of the Ganda's shuttle as he weaves his cloth. The chelik believe that if they can guess the name of the tree on which the bird is sitting, the thread will break. They call out the names of all the trees they can think of and when the bird falls silent they say they have guessed the right tree and the weaver's thread has snapped.

The Muria have ideas about the hare: it comes from the moon; it never drinks water, but only dew; in the rains it catches the falling water. If a man sees the hare in the moon move, he will get a fit. During the last famine, [261] some Muria kept themselves alive on hare's turd, and even now they eat it, cooked into a soup, for it is considered nourishing and medicinal.

Before there was sun and moon it was by the peacock's cry that men knew the time, and still today the bird calls *Eh ho eh ho mane*, so that all who live in Nadumbhum (the Middle World) know that evening has come. When it cries in the dark, they know that dawn is breaking.

224 For hunting, the Muria's chief weapon is still the bow and arrow, though
411 some of them have old guns which they regard with great reverence and often call by special names like Maoligundi.[1] Spears are used and pellet-bows,

[1] Old guns are worshipped by the Maharaja at the Dassera festival in Jagdalpur.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
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THE MURIA'S LIVELIHOOD

There are uncle-nephew sambhar grazing there.' 539
When the Raja saw them the deer ran to the hill. 223
He flew the hawk to catch them.
But the hawk did not catch the sambhar and flew away.
Milo milo called the Raja, but its pubic hairs took no heed.
The Raja went home weeping and told his elder brother's wife
That his hawk had flown away.

'Give me food quickly, I will go to find it.'
The girl gave food, the Raja ate it quickly.
He slung his basket on his back and went to find his hawk.
He went calling *Milo milo*, but he found no trace.
The Raja wandered on from land to land.
He came to the realm of Jihgunji Raja,
And called *Milo milo*, but still there was no sign.

The daughters of Ispural were living there.
In their house they hid the hawk; they said, 'We have no news of it'.
The Raja said, 'Where is my hawk? I will give you a reward'.
'We know nothing of your hawk and we want no reward.
Let us go to play, brother, in the sea of sixteen streams.
Then we will tell you of your hawk, and then you will find it.'

They went to bathe in the sea and having bathed, returned.
'Choose now which of us you will take away.'
'I will take the youngest, Phulsundri Rani.'
Quickly they finished the marriage, and gave him back his hawk.
He took his hawk and Rani and brought them home with him.
His elder brother's wife came to greet him with a pot of water.
She greeted him with Johar, and thus they lived and ate.

X. Fishing

The Muria are not professional fishermen, a duty which normally falls upon the Kuruk or Dhimar, but whenever they live near a river they naturally make every effort to supplement their diet, and everywhere they catch the small fish that live in tanks and flooded fields. 226

They do not know a great deal about fish, and apart from saying generally that lightning is caused by the flashing of the scales of a great fish that leaps into the air and the legends they tell about the bod fish, which is the totem of several clans, they have little folklore about them. They distinguish a dozen types of fish, among them the *bodmin*, *sipa*, *dandai* or *karangra*, *nāri* (or *bāns*), *bots* (or *khoksi*), *dundum*, *luwa* (or *turu*) and *bāgum*. 825 821 614

The gall-bladder of the *bāgum* is regarded as an important remedy for snake-bite, a belief which is shared even by educated Hindus and members of the State Medical Service. The Muria extract the gall-bladder and preserve it by filling it with the small *kosra* grain. They keep this carefully and when it is needed, the grain, which has been thoroughly soaked in the bladder secretions, is removed and put in water. When it is dissolved it is given to the patient to drink. 278

The Muria fishing apparatus is of the usual type. They sometimes use a hook and line suspended from a bamboo rod; the hook is baited with flies and 227 226

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
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1 The 'horse' of Lingo Pen at Semargaon
2 A Dhurwa hobby-horse
3 Hobby-horse at the Malshot wedding
4 The 'horse' of Lingal Pen at Chorpal

[p. 196 (A)]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
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in each case what kind of worship, what special offerings, what peculiar rites will be acceptable to the god.

These mediums are known in Bastar by the Halbi word Siraha. A Leski is sometimes the Siraha's assistant; sometimes the words are used synonymously. The Siraha does not offer sacrifice, indeed he is not a priest at all; he is simply a medium through whom the gods make known their will. He has the power of falling into trance, of dancing ecstatically and of diagnosing disease and interpreting the divine commands while in this condition. Scores of these men may be seen at any of the great festivals in the State. With their long hair flying wildly about them as they shake their heads, with scourges and whips in their hands and their drunken, drugged, besotted look, they are a distinctive feature of every Muria religious assembly. Yet, in ordinary life, they are completely normal, sensible, hard-working men and no one would suppose that they were capable of such remarkable transformations.

The Gunia, who understands *guni* or magical charms, is simply a medicine-man. He is called in to cure the sick, to recover lost property and to discover the culprit when goods or cattle are stolen. The Panjiyar is a diviner who works by measuring bits of grass which he questions until he obtains the correct answer. The Gunia tends rather to work with a winnowing-fan or a lamp. Both use grain for divination.

Another common form of divination in Bastar is by eggs. Among the Hill Maria, the Kaser-Gaita watches the eggs hatched in his house; if these get addled it may be a sign that the village site should be changed. The Muria test the omens by egg-throwing at the time of breaking stilts.[1] All the Bastar tribes use eggs in worship, and offer them before going out to hunt and fish, 'for they are greatly loved by the gods'.

Eggs are liked by the gods because 'an egg is like a virgin whom no one has touched, or a pregnant woman who holds two souls at once'. A curious tale explains the origin of poultry.

> There was an entirely dark village twelve *kos* long. Once the people went out with a widow's son to search for light. They went a long long way until they lay down weary to sleep. When they awoke they found the sun in the sky. The widow's son declared that he had not slept and had seen a one-legged man put the sun there. The others were jealous that he should have seen this sight and killed him. They divided the flesh among themselves and gave some to the boy's mother, who took it not knowing what it was. She put it aside for him to eat when he should return. But next day, early in the morning as the sun came into the sky, the boy's flesh turned into a cock and began to crow. So when a hen lays an egg it is only a lump of flesh; it is when it hears the cock crow that life comes into it. That is why gods and men love eggs—*for* they are a sign of strength and life.

For this reason, it is said, gods and ghosts are not often responsible for addling eggs; this is done by human enemies. If a setting of eggs is thus spoilt by black magic, it should be lifted up together with its straw and placed on a piece of an earthen pot. It should be taken to a cross-road, where the priest must say, '*Thu ihu, sunlatia*, go back to whoever sent you'. He throws away the eggs and the party returns home without looking back. Elsewhere when

[1] Divination by egg-throwing is recorded of the Khasi.—P. R. T. Gurdon, *The Khasis* (London, 1914), pp. 76 and 216ff. In 1942 I found the Juang of Pal Lahara employing the virgin son of the village priest to test the omens, before a festival, by egg-throwing. The use of eggs in worship is widespread in Bastar and Orissa.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
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791 considerably weakened and the sensations become very dull and dim. The higher
781 centres of the brain seem to be partially split off from the incoming sensory currents, on the one hand, and from the motor centres, on the other'.[1] At the same time, the mental state becomes more and more simple and the many objects of normal consciousness gradually tend to give way to a state of monoideism. These mediums are undoubtedly out of their wits; they can hurl themselves about and fall with a force that would injure men in an ordinary state of consciousness.[2]

●825 It is interesting to find that in Bastar as elsewhere throughout the world
171 this ecstatic condition is associated with the horse. 'It is not only in Java and Bali', writes Beryl de Zoëte, 'that the hobby-horse is associated with trance. The wonderful Roumanian Calusari, the little horsemen, the Good Fairies who dramatically fight the Wicked One in their ecstatic dance, have as one of their principal functions the exorcism of evil spirits who bring disease, just like the Koeda Kepand (rattan horses) of Java and the Sanghyang Djaran of Bali. And this function is exercised through an abnormal state of consciousness which at a certain degree of intensity we call trance, and in some cases through the medium of a wooden or rattan horse, or merely the head and tail of a horse united by some kind of rod . . . Perhaps there is no continent in which the hobby-horse is unknown. In England he seems innocent enough, ambling along among the mysterious antlered figures of Abbot's Bromley, or through many a French folk-dance.'[3]

The horse has long been used in magic. Tacitus and Camden referred to augury by the horse in the ancient world. It has been said that the Wooden Horse of Troy was 'an instrument of magic rather than military tactics'.[4] Armed horsemen in Arabia in more recent times are quoted as riding round the tent in which a child is to be born and showing clearly by their arms, horses and movements that they are trying to frighten away evil spirits at a vitally important time.[5] In India the worship of the horse has been recorded for certain aboriginal tribes. For example, Hislop says that throughout the Nagpur District at his time (*circa* 1860) everyone worshipped Koda Pen, and a god named Kola Sur was worshipped with an offering of earthen horses on the top of a hill near Great Ambora.[6] The mare-headed goddess, Basali, represented with a horse's head or as a wooden horse, is worshipped by the Keots and allied tribes in Orissa.[7] The Bhil represent their dead as riding on

[1] J. B. Pratt, *The Religious Consciousness* (New York, 1923), p. 424.

[2] With the Bastar trance we may compare the 'jerks' which have been described by a contemporary in a revival in South Carolina in 1803. Persons would 'suddenly fall to the ground, and become strangely convulsed with what was called the jerks; the head and neck, and sometimes the body also, moving backwards and forwards with spasmodic violence, and so rapidly that the plaited hair of a woman's head might be heard to crack . . And then there was the jumping exercise in which several persons might be seen standing perfectly erect, and springing upward without seeming to bend a joint of their bodies.' —W. T. White, *American Negro Folk-songs* (Harvard, 1928), p. 43, quoting Bishop Capers. This would be a good description of the Muria trance.

[3] W. Spies and B. de Zoëte, *Dance and Drama in Bali* (London, 1938), p. 78.

[4] W. F. J. Knight, 'Myth and Legend of Troy' in *Folk-Lore*, Vol. XLVI, p. 98, who cites L. Malten in *Jarbb. d. deutsch. arch. Inst.*, Vol. XIX (1915), pp. 179ff. as authority for 'the dangerous and demoniac associations of the horse in early times'.

[5] Ibid., p. 109.

[6] Hislop, *op. cit.*, Part IV, p. iii. See also V. Ball, *Jungle Life in India* (London, 1880), p. 23.

[7] P. Sen, 'A Basali Folk-Song', *Man in India*, Vol. XII, pp. 175ff. and S. C. Mitra, 'On a Curious Cult of Orissa', *JASB*, Vol. XXX, p. 19.

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horseback; so do the Korku on their carved memorial tablets.[1] The Muria often offer horses of clay or brass (Fig. 24) at their shrines. Sir Lewis Fermor

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After a photograph by G. F. Ramadier

FIG. 28. Gond shrine near Naghir, Chanda District

discovered a remarkable iron horse among clay horses offered to a village god on the top of a hill of manganese-ore in the Chhindwara District, which he thought might be compared with the horse offered to the Southern Indian deity Iyenar.[2]

One of the oldest of Indian sacrifices is the *aswamedha*, or horse-sacrifice, which has been traced to Scythia. 'There has always', says Penzer, 'been a close connexion between horses and the sea-god, and also with the sun. The latter connexion is due not merely, I think, to the fact that the horse was the "vehicle"—of the sun-god, but because, through its swiftness, strength and activity, it was itself a symbol of the sun.' Penzer gives an account of the rite, which included the horse's consecration and its release for a year's wandering before the actual sacrifice. After its death, the queen lay with the animal so that its great powers of fertility might be transferred to her.[3] Fraser describes rites for the horse among the Russians and Chinese.[4] The Greeks sacrificed horses to the sea-god.

This association of the horse with magic, worship and sacrifice provides a background to its connexion with divination and ecstatic trance among the

[1] See W. Koppers, 'Monuments to the Dead of the Bhils and Other Primitive Tribes in Central India', *Annali Lateranensi*, Vol. VI (1942), *passim*; D. H. Gordon, 'Korku Memorial Tablets', *Man*, 1936, Vol. XIX.

[2] L. Fermor, 'An Iron Horse from the Central Provinces', *JRASB*, Vol. II (1936), pp. 211–14.

[3] *The Ocean of Story*, Vol. IV, pp. 14–16.

[4] *Pausanias*, Vol. IV, pp. 197f.

MURIA RELIGION

825 171 Garo at their great annual festival of the ingathering of the harvest called the *Wangala* or *Gurenala*. At the climax of the Gond-Pardhan ceremony of the Laru Kaj in Mandla the 'horses of the god' perform an ecstatic dance.[1]

This custom of making horses to dance with may be compared to that of the Buryat shamans of Baikal (Siberia) who use horse-staves made of wood or iron, the upper part being bent with a horse-head carved on it, while the middle part of the stick forms the knee-joints of the horse, and the lower end is fashioned into a hoof. Bells are tied to the horse-staves and 'to make it look more realistic' miniature stirrups are added. They represent the horses on which the shaman rides to the Upper and Lower Worlds. In its power of inducing trance the horse-stave appears to be connected with the drum which is often covered with horse-hide.[2]

825 532 787 791 I have noticed very similar customs among the Muria. Lingo Pen has two horses always kept in his shrine at Semurgaon. These are decorated roots of trees which have been chosen because their shape resembles that of a horse's head. At the festivals of the god, these 'horses' are carried about by the mediums and are used both for divination and to stimulate trance. Decorated staves representing horses are carried by many of the chelik when they attend the clan festivals in the Abujhmar foot-hills. In one village, Kanher, members of the Gandu sept have a special relation with the wooden horse of Bara Pen. At Metawand I watched for several hours the antics of a medium who was carrying on his shoulders the wooden horse of his clan-god and at Bandopal a medium carrying an imaginary horse on his shoulder 'ambled, caracoled, pranced and plunged' for two miles before my slow-moving car as we made our way into the jungle for the Marka Pandum. 'The god rides upon him', they told me, 'and he cannot stop dancing for days at a time.' At a wedding in Malakot, I saw a medium riding on a characteristic hobby-horse; and again in the Dhurwa country to the south, I saw a man dancing astride a similar wooden hobby-horse. In both cases the rider would fall into trance if anything went wrong with the proceedings and would be able to diagnose the supernatural cause of the trouble.

This association of the horse with trance may be due to the dignity and beauty of the animal or to its swiftness, or possibly because it is regarded as a fertility offerings symbol.

'Three experiences', says Campbell, 'combine to make the horse a leading guard against the Evil Eye. To horse-owning peoples, his willing strength, intelligence, spirit and devotion make the horse the guardian of the higher or self-sacrificing type. Among tribes to whom the horse is strange, his size, power and fury make him a friend requiring and rewarding the process of squaring. To all who have dealings with the horse, his nervousness, his delicacy, his liability to strange sweatings and other sudden sicknesses shew that the horse is a favourite home for spirit-influence.'[3]

IX. The Cure of Disease

755 Where the trouble is sickness, there seems to be what would be regarded elsewhere as a definite element of 'suggestion' in the Siraha's treatment. In December 1940, I was lying very ill in my camp at Metawand. The Pargana

[1] Cf. Shamrao Hivale, 'The Laru Kaj', *Man in India*, Vol. XXIV (1944), p. 122.
[2] M. A. Czaplicka, *Aboriginal Siberia* (Oxford, 1914), p. 224, quoting Agapitoff and Khangaloff.
[3] J. M. Campbell, 'Notes on the Spirit Basis of Belief and Custom', *The Indian Antiquary*, Vol. XXX (1901), p. 100.

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

Kokora Karsana

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This is called Kokora (Crane) Karsana at Remawand, Mindachna Pata at Markabera, and Tutumri Karsana at Kuntpadar. It may have other names elsewhere. The girls form a circle; each puts her hands on her neighbour's knees, that is, her right hand on her right-hand neighbour's left knee while her right-hand neighbour puts her left hand on her right knee, so that all round the circle arms are crossed and the girls bending forward. They dance very vigorously, standing stationary, but jerking their buttocks inwards. Presently they swing round and face outwards, and now their buttocks knock against each other to the amusement of all. In Sidhawand, when the girls faced outwards they lifted their hands from their knees and clapped them together. But the essence of this dance is its frankly sexual imitations.

Songs

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Kon pāra jābe re kokoda, durun ruchu durun ruchu.
Kalār pāra jābe re, durun ruchu durun ruchu.
Kewta pāra jābe re, durun ruchu durun ruchu.
Māhara pāra jābe re, durun ruchu durun ruchu.

Where are you going to, O crane? *Durun ruchu durun ruchu.*
Go to the Kalar hamlet, O crane.
Go to the Kewta hamlet, O crane.
Go to the Mahara hamlet, O crane.

[845]

The names of the hamlets are those of low Hindu castes. The refrain *ruchu ruchu* is reminiscent of the noise *ruchmuch ruchmuch* which a bed is supposed to make when intercourse occurs on it. The crane is everywhere a sexual symbol, the devotion of these birds to one another being proverbial.

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O re re loyo re rela re re loyo oy!

O lu tumri parheli ātin! O toilet-twig from the ebony tree!

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
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piece of wood in his hand and lifting it over each pile several times from right to left uttered charms calling on the soul of the deceased to be content. The dead man's son brought a chicken and made it eat the rice, going from right to left three times. The Waddai passed his stick quickly over the chicken each time. However, when the fowl was eating the rice, it did not follow the proper order, but started to eat the sixth pile after the fourth. The Waddai declared that this was because two persons were involved in the fatal magic. After this had been done three times, the dead man's son passed the chicken between his legs backwards and twisted its neck till it was severed from the trunk. This he threw behind him, holding the head in his hands. He ripped open the head by cutting it through the beak and threw it into the fire. If this was not done, the head might turn into what is called in Gondi *vispitte* (a kind of bird which is known as *jiv chirai* in Hindi) and if this came to the village and called 'jiv, jiv' the people would die.

They then dug a hole in the earth close to the leaf-cups with a knife and placed a forked saja stick there. The dead man's son stood in front of the stick with his back to it, holding the cow's tail in his hand. He pointed it first at the sun, then to the four corners of the world and lastly to the place where the dead body had been cremated. He did this thrice and then tied the tail to the stick and poured a little landa on it. The dead man's wife offered some mahua liquor in a leaf-cup, because when her husband was alive one day when they were drinking they had agreed to die together. The Waddai, therefore, said as she was giving the liquor, 'Do not also take her away with you; release her from her promise; let her live for a while and look after the other members of the family'. Then the deceased's son and brother-in-law, who had carried the rice and pulse, threw it down near the stick. The dead man's son who had also taken with him a little thatch from the roof of his house now threw this at the stick saying, 'You built the house, now accept this'. Similarly, all the other things of which the old man had been fond when he was alive were thrown there. His son-in-law, however, picked up his bow and arrow and his knife was taken by one of the drummers. The drummers then threw away their drum-sticks into the ashes of the pyre.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
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his enemy directly by blowing something at him, by putting 754
a charm into his food, by performing certain rites or by the evil eye. He may turn into an animal and attack his foe in wild and bestial guise. He may obtain the services of a ghost or a godling to do his work for him.

Stories illustrating all these different methods are common in the Maria villages. At Khutepal I was told 'how a man there could transform himself into a tiger. He would then lie hid in the jungle and when any human being or cow came by, he used to kill and devour him. He then took his human form again and came home and lay with his wife'. After he had killed five or six people in this way, the villagers finally summoned up courage to track down the 'tiger' and kill it. A watch was kept and one day to their surprise and horror they saw the man actually changing into a tiger and then back to human form. They rushed at him and killed him instantly. Similar stories were told me in Dhurli, but here they said that it was most common for such things to happen in the great Zamindari of Jeypore. It is generally believed that if a were-tiger is injured, similar marks will appear on the human body of the man who has possessed it.

Sometimes instead of turning into an animal the sorcerer 754
sends an animal to do his business for him. There are many 825
stories of how people have been attacked by bears and tigers on this account. Indeed many Maria believe that no animal or snake will ever attack a human being unless it is incited to do so by magic. Once on the way from Pordem to Rewali I saw the funeral pyre of a snake. A little while previously a very long snake marked with alternate black and yellow bands had been sent to Rewali by a magician to kill one of his enemies, Nupo Bira. Bira, however, was able to kill the snake in time, and its body was then carried out of the village and cremated beyond the boundary-line. Four pegs of tendu wood were driven into the ground at the four corners of the pyre, and the people claimed that the ritual cremation together with the pegs would effectively protect Bira from any further attack.[1]

[1] An extraordinary case occurred at Bhandara in 1929. A Kunbin (Hindu) woman was bitten by a snake and to avoid further trouble installed the image of Nagoba (the cobra god) in her house. This deity used to possess her and she gained a wide reputation as a healer. One day a fisherwoman, haunted by evil spirits, came for treatment.